

Michigan NETStalk

Michigan Network of Employers For Traffic Safety

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CLICK IT...or TICKET...

"A New Law You Can Live With"

LANSING

On Friday, March 10th, Michigan's safety belt law changed to permit police to stop and ticket drivers who fail to buckle up (Public Act 29 of 1999). As Colonel Michael D. Robinson, Director of the Department of State Police, said "The goal is to save lives and prevent serious injuries, not write tickets." Michigan's Office of Highway Safety Planning estimates that this change in the law will save 100 lives each year and prevent thousands of injuries. In fact, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) data shows that restraint use rates are 15 percentage points higher, on average, and the fatality rates lower in states with enforcement provisions like Michigan's new law.

Under the new law, police may stop a motorist solely for not wearing a safety belt in the front seat of a vehicle. In addition, the law allows police officers to stop a motorist if a child ages 4 through 15 is not properly restrained, regardless of where he or she is riding in the vehicle. All children under the age of 4 must be properly

restrained in an approved child safety seat in all seating positions.

Please get the word out to your employees and co-workers on this life-saving change to our law. This new law presents a great opportunity to start an employee safety belt use program in your organization—for employees and their families.

Materials are available from Michigan's "Click It or Ticket" program to help promote restraint use and the new law in your organization. Vinyl banners, posters, safety belt law card and a child passenger safety alert (flier) are all available at no cost. You may order these materials by calling the Michigan Resource Center toll free at (800) 626-4636.

Remember: Fastening your safety belt and assuring that every passenger in your vehicle is always buckled up—every time on every trip—are some of the most important actions you can take to protect yourself and loved ones in a crash.



5th Annual Summit

The sponsors of the 2000 Michigan Traffic Safety Summit, the Michigan Traffic Safety Management Steering Committee and the Michigan State Safety Commission will conduct its 5th Annual Summit, April 25–26, at the Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center at Michigan State University, East Lansing. Professionals from public and private sector employers, engineering, enforcement, education and EMS disciplines, as well as health professionals, legislative representatives and traffic safety advocates will attend.

The annual summit will discuss important traffic safety topics, including:

- Fatigued and drowsy drivers;
- Child passenger safety laws;
- Commercial vehicle enforcement;
- Graduated Driver Licensing laws;

- Repeat offender laws;
- Traffic calming techniques;
- The psychology of youthful risky behavior and how these drivers can be reached.

A special guest speaker will be the Ontario, Canada, assistant minister for safety and regulation. If you are interested in attending this important traffic safety summit, now is the time to register. The fee is \$65 before April 7 and \$100 thereafter. For more information on the summit agenda and for registration information, visit the Office of Highway Safety Planning's Web site at www.obsp.state.mi.us.



NEWS YOU CAN USE

Michigan NETS Survey

By now all Michigan NETS members should have received a Member Questionnaire with a cover letter requesting they complete a survey. If you did not receive this survey, please contact Michigan NETS Coordinator, Dan Vartanian; he will supply you with a duplicate. This survey is vitally important to determine each organization's continued interest and to gather information for future planning. If you have the survey and have not faxed and mailed back the questionnaire, please do so. Or, call Dan at (517) 333-5322 and he will be glad to provide you with a duplicate.

Did You Know?

- Every 14 seconds someone in the U.S. is injured in a traffic crash, and every 12 minutes someone is killed.
- Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children 5 to 14. An average of eight children are killed and more than 900 are injured in crashes every day.
- Safety belts reduce the chance of injury or death in a crash by 45 percent, in a pickup truck by 60 percent and save nearly 10,000 lives each year.
- Children who are properly secured in safety seats survive 3/4 of the crashes that would otherwise be fatal.
- Commercial trucks take longer to stop. A car traveling at 55mph can stop in about 130 to 140 feet. A truck traveling at the same speed takes 400 feet to stop.

Repeat Offender Implementation Update

The Repeat Offender database reveals there were 5,057 arrests

Give 'em
the boot.



and plate confiscations for repeat offenders from October 1, 1999 through January 13, 2000. In addition, the Department of State's Driver License Appeal Division (DLAD) has ordered over 571 ignition interlock devices be installed on repeat offender vehicles as they are returning to the road after a period of license revocation (through December 27, 1999). The database also includes seven convictions for Child Endangerment, and one for DWLS causing Death. There are 35 repeat offenders who have been arrested twice since October 1, 1999.

Michigan NETS is in the process of developing a new employer-based program, including development of educational materials, to raise awareness at the workplace of these new laws. More information regarding this program will be announced in the coming months.

1998 Michigan Traffic Crash Facts & OHSP Annual Report

The 1998 Michigan Traffic Crash Facts books are now available. The 1998 books come in two volumes—one with statewide statistics and the other with county/community statistics. For copies of the books, please call Theresa Page at (517) 322-1424. Some statistics are available on OHSP's website at www.ohsp.state.mi.us.

Traffic Crash Facts at a Glance

Crash Facts	1997	1998	% Change
Deaths	1,446	1,367	-5.5
Injuries	137,548	131,578	-4.3
Crashes	425,793	403,766	-5.2
Drivers Involved	737,939	701,056	-5.0
Vehicles Involved	739,538	702,680	-5.0
Fatal Crashes	1,283	1,235	-3.7
Estimated MV Mileage Travel (billions)	89.2	91.6	2.7
Death Rate Per 100 Million Vehicle Miles	1.6	1.5	-6.3
Fatal Crash Rate Per 100 Million Vehicle Miles	1.4	1.3	-7.1

Changes in Annual National Drive Safely at Work Week Campaign

As an alliance of America's corporate and government leaders, the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS) works throughout the year to help reduce preventable and unnecessary, yet costly, crashes in our nation's workforce. NETS has traditionally sponsored this week to help employers create awareness of traffic safety issues within their organizations and help end the unnecessary human suffering and costs associated with traffic crashes.

This fourth annual event has two major changes in the year 2000. Traditionally, this safety week has occurred in April and will be changed permanently to the month of September. The month of April is surrounded by several competing traffic safety initiatives and

employees are often focused on religious holidays, spring breaks and other issues. September is the perfect month to have an impact on safety because it follows the three months of summer when commuter traffic is typically lighter. Once school starts and people return from vacations, the roadway environment changes dramatically. The new dates for the campaign will be September 11-15, 2000. The other change is the name of the campaign which has been changed to Drive Safely Work Week (DSWW). You will be receiving more information on opportunities to promote this campaign in the coming months.





What About Those Women Drivers?

Did you know that more young women in their twenties and early thirties are incapacitated by accidental injury than by anything else? So says Dr. Laura Nigham,

M.D., Family Practice Physician. Further, she tells us that risky behavior with automobiles, alcohol, drugs and lifestyle habits are more of a threat to women than disease. In fact, always buckling a seat belt and never drinking and driving (or riding with someone else who has been drinking) may make the largest difference in a young woman's lifespan.¹

Are women involved in as many crashes as their male counterparts? In a study focusing on why people speed, Gabany, Plummer and Grigs (1997) report that women say they speed because they feel more time pressures, they dislike driving and, thus, terminate the task as quickly as possible and they report being more thoughtless about their driving actions. However, it was discovered that very young (especially males) and very old (especially females) are three times more likely to be at fault in crashes compared to middle-aged drivers.² But Ryan, Legge and Rosma (1998) believe that female drivers have higher crash rates than males across the board. They studied the influence of age and gender in drivers' crash risks and crash types learning that females have a higher crash rate than males at all ages and are more likely to suffer injuries resulting from a crash.

Why would gender make a difference? Perhaps, they suggest, it stems from a tendency for females to approach the task of driving from a different perspective than males. Riskier driving behavior among young women was associated with stress and habitual alcohol consumption. In the middle-aged group, poorer driving behaviors were related to higher levels of education, feeling rushed, higher alcohol consumption and less life satisfaction. Crash rates are also related to lapses in attention span.³ It is no surprise to any of us that stress affects concentration while driving and, with 46 percent of the work force comprised of women, stress is a factor in risky driving behavior.

And what about the influence of cell phones and driving? Dial C for Crash! Researchers have discovered that cell phones are a serious distraction to drivers and are now being blamed for an increase in the number of crashes. Some statistics even show that the risk is the same for both driving after drinking to one's legal limit and utilizing a car phone while driving.⁴

Experts say:

- If traffic is heavy, turn off your phone.
- Pull off the road before placing a call
- Use a "hands-free" phone
- Avoid stressful, intense conversations
- If you must call, do it only when you can respond safely to traffic conditions around you

Loss of control while driving seems to affect male and female drivers differently. For females, the loss of control usually resulted in a collision with another vehicle while male drivers' loss of control usually led to a single-vehicle crash. And, typically, the male driver

crashes usually occurred during evening and night. However, female driver crashes were more related to slippery road conditions.⁵ Does this suggest that women drivers could benefit from more instruction in dealing with adverse driving conditions?

Clearly, older female drivers have some unique driving challenges. A study by Guerrier, Manivannan and Nair (1999) suggests that older drivers have more difficulties at intersections, especially in their performance of left turns. While testing for a number of perceptual and motor skill abilities, the study found that the most discriminating factor for older female drivers is their short-term memory. When short-term memory is sharp, female drivers have less trouble negotiating left turns at intersections.

Women may also be more seriously hurt when crashes involve the use of air bags. Sitting closer than 12 inches to the steering wheel is a hazard, yet many women did not effectively estimate how close they sit. Also, shorter drivers (who tend to be women) should objectively measure the distance between the nose and the center of the wheel and keep a safe distance of over 10 inches.

So, what about those women drivers? They:

- Remain more of a crash and injury risk than men
- Are likely to approach the task of driving from a more negative perspective
- Feel more rushed than their male counterparts
- Are less involved in the driving task
- May demonstrate greater memory problems with age which impairs skill⁶

What can we do to increase safety for women drivers? First, we can direct education programs regarding the importance of safety belt use and not drinking and driving toward female drivers. Next, we can conduct focus groups to determine how to design information and education campaigns aimed at addressing the needs of these drivers. And, finally, we can encourage communities and enforcement to address the unique challenges of the female driver.

Michigan NETS would very much appreciate hearing from employers that have addressed the issues of working women and stressful lifestyles. Please contact Dan Vartanian at the Office of Highway Safety Planning by calling (517) 333-5322. We welcome the opportunity to publish success stories from employers that address these important issues and their impact on driving behavior.

¹ Good Health Magazine, September/October 1999, "Behavior, Not Illness Creates Risk For Young Women," Laura Nighorn, M.D.

² The William A. Donahue Group, Literature Review for the Office of Highway Safety Planning, 1999.

³ Dobson, Brown, Ball, Powers and McFadden, (1999). Women drivers' behavior, socio-demographic characteristics and accident. *Accident Analysis and Prevention*. 31, 525-535

⁴ Dial "A" for Accident, <http://www.genacc-us.com/dial a.htm>

⁵ Laapotti and Keskinen, (1998) Differences in fatal loss-of-control accidents between young male and female drivers. *Accident Analysis and Prevention*. 30:435-442.

⁶ The William A. Donahue Group, Literature Review for the Office of Highway Safety Planning, (1999).



Reaching Youth in the Workplace Grant Update

Michigan's first "Reaching Youth In The Workplace" (RYITWP) grant has been awarded and activity is occurring at a fast pace! A model RYITWP grant project was developed with a local food market in Genesee County, VG's, which is a member of a chain of grocery stores in counties north and west of Detroit. VG's staff worked with members from the local Connexions Coalition to develop underage drinking prevention programs for the 18–21-year-olds employed at their business.

RYITWP grants are offered by Prevention Network and funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Programs and the Office of Highway Safety Planning. These grants funds were established to reach youth that are 18–21 years old, and not in school, with alcohol prevention programs. Grants can be awarded for up to \$5,000 to include costs of staff, training and materials but not equipment over \$500.00.

The VG's employee team that was developed to oversee the activity of this grant consists of two advisors, one adult department head, one young adult department head and two youths.

Since December the following activities have taken place:

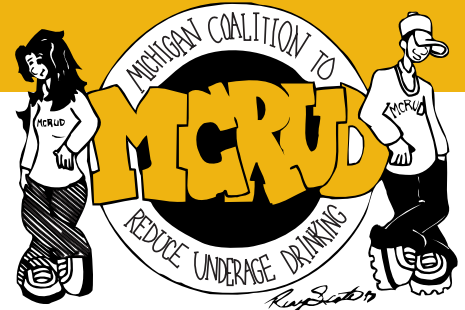
- Purchase of two bulletin boards to post underage alcohol prevention materials.
- Creation of a large, freestanding non-alcoholic beverage display.
- Signs developed and posted around the store for customers and

staff encouraging responsible use of alcohol.

- Involvement of the community by soliciting participation of local printering donation.
- Developed thousands of bag stuffers (printing donated by local business) with alcohol prevention message; intended to dually inform customers, while having young baggers and cashiers repeatedly handle and discuss the message from the week before Christmas through New Years.
- Alcohol prevention messages to staff on bottom of internal order sheets, etc.
- Creation of a large Superbowl display of non-alcoholic beverages for a distributor contest.

As you can see, with a little creativity and technical support offered from the Prevention Network staff, your business can also do fun, effective activities to combat underage drinking.

If you would like to find out more about this program, or about obtaining a "Reaching Youth in the Workplace" grant, please contact Shannon Watkins at Prevention Network at (517) 393-6890.



ROAD-WISE

